

THE

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FRIENDLY
RETRIEVERS,
A
CALM ADDRESS,

MORE PARTICULARLY

TO

Those of Mr. W—ff—y's

SENTIMENTS and CONNECTIONS.

*Whom when Aquilla and Priscilla had heard, they
took him unto them, and expounded to him the
way of God more perfectly.*

Acts, chap. 18th, verse 26th.

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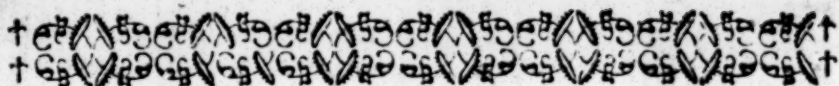
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T H E
FRIENDLY RETRIEVERS.

My dear Friends,

IT is not from a disposedness to find fault, or a bare relish for dry controversy, (each being I judge) foreign to both my natural, and spiritual constitution, earnestly wishing a greater conformity to the Redeemer, under that amiable character, the giver of delight, but springeth from a desire of promoting your best interest, bright'ning your views, clearing your prospects of, and assisting your progress towards that good land you are (I hope) going to possess. Hence I crave leave thus to address, I much esteem and honour in you, all that appearance of conformity to the divine nature, which illumines in many; this the glory and perfection of the Creature, and which I wish was more eligible in the lives and converses of professors, God is light. This the illustrious pattern, and the nearer we draw after him, the higher we rise in the scale of beauty and blessedness.

But as the heart is deceitful above all things, Satan can transform, error wear truths garb, and we liable to deception. 'Tis highly necessary, deeply to enquire, if our views of the Gospel, as Gods plan of salvation, are rightly pointed, since (even an Apollo fervent in spirit,) has had need to have expounded to him the way of God more perfectly, no Christian but may add to virtue, knowledge, and a growth of it in our Lord Jesus Christ.

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The

The Apostle incited the Ephesians to a right understanding in the knowledge, in the mystery of Christ; the Colossians, that they might be filled with all wisdom and spiritual understanding, increasing in the knowledge of God, and to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery, of God, and the Father, and of Christ, to their establishment in the faith, that they might be able to render a reason of the hope which was in them, and contend for the faith, (first rightly knowing it,) and now before I enter on the point in view, give me leave to premise a few things, and first what I think no one will deny, that a consistency in matters of faith and Religion, (however too little regarded) should be if possible investigated by every professor, and that in order that they might not only have self evident views of truth, to be able to distinguish it from error, rejoice in it (as it enlarges the mind and gives freedom,) but likewise to capacitate, (in a spirit of love and charity,) to reduce erring Brethren into its most safe and acceptable paths. Here a query may arise, how this may be done? who would not gladly and freely embrace truth? I answer, some like Galio care for none of these things, take up with the principles of their forefathers, and might have been Heathens with as good a grace, others strain out religion to their own size of thought and idea, and would wrench truths standard to make it appear uniform, give me leave to propose a plan, I wish it may be adjudged a more excellent way, and first in a word to the Sceptist and Deist. I hope he will allow me that the inspiration of the Almighty, or all sufficient, giveth understanding, that the father of our spirits can impress them, and communicate to them every requisite to their well being and happiness, and if humbly implored, will as readily, (may I not say far more) readily and assuredly disburse for our occasions, as ever natural Parents did to supply the exigences of their pleading offspring: Let him then with a due fence of his ignorance, (for the wisest heathens confess their highest attainments, was to find they knew nothing.) I say under such a sense implore his aid, to irradiate his doubtful way with truths illustrious shine. And

And, that the christian likewise would invoke the God of all grace, the Father of lights and glory, to give him the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, that he might abound more and more in the knowledge of him, and in all judgement so as to approve things that are excellent.

To the former shall just observe. May not our Maker have revealed his will in some sort, or impressed divinely in or on some subjects, what are his amiable qualities? from the earliest ages, it seems to have been taken for granted. Scarce a heathen writer but enshrines his Deity, bends his converse with human, or inspires or insatuates his priests, and votaries, and why may not a Moses, a Samuel, or Isaiah, be invested with extraordinary emoluments as ambassadors from the sublime Prince, for the more easy and familiar discovery of his will respecting us, let this be duly weighed and as a help to this hint, observe, that as an anonymous author's productions are frequently known, from some acquaintance with the qualities and nature of his person or character, so if scripture (devolved upon us) bear a divine mark and signature, suited to a wise, holy, good, and just nature, (which must suit our conceptions of deity, if properly pointed,) a Being infinitely removed from all creaturely debilities, errors and imperfections: What just reasons then can be assigned for our not receiving and embracing it? for proof take these three or four plausible and probable reasons as co-adjutors; first, the scriptures represent the divine essence as being, what we must suppose him to be, (if our ideas are refined from sensual, and sublimed from brutal and vicious affections.) His perfections are described worthy of a God, as being a spirit, infinite, uncircumscribed, dealing with our mentalls, acting on them, though sometimes unperceivable, yet conspicuous.

Eternal,— the ancient parent and father of time, and creation uncreate, for so must be the first cause, unchangeable, since inconstancy and frailty is our creature badge, we know not always our own mind, and when forming or adopting schemes, see not what invisibly lurking futurities will like moles sap their foundations. Wisdom, knows

what he is about, can make poisons salutary, Fools of philosophers, and of diviners mad men, fleas leap a yard and crocodils heave the upper jaw; Power, gave us to Be, puts up affronts, shakes creation, and melts bells in their steeples. Holy, this holiness is defined to be the shine and lustre of all his perfections, for instance, his wisdom and power might be used to our unhappiness, but it is holy, his justice to our destruction, but he chuses a holy conformity to himself, and delights and favours his own image where impressed. Justice, or righteousness, this all acknowledge, dishonesty is every where decryed, we also see how he hangs murderers, and writes mementos in markets, * yet goodness does it but seldom, just to tell the deist he's alive and well. Goodness feeds rebels, shines upon dunghills, waits seventy years upon sinners, and bids e'm live in their blood. Truth, stooped once to swear, though adverse to a lye, most men are one continued lie or actively or passively, defections from truth, deceptions to themselves and others.

2dly we find it clearly ascertain maintain, the prerogatives of deity, his name great, glorious, unspeakable, his state transcend, high and lifted up, his train, thousands of thousands, humbling himself to behold things done in heaven, it's not being clean in his sight, pure Angels respectively chargeable with folly: His laws how right, how holy, just and good; how guarded, the breach how punished? how very far sublimed from the most refined Gods of the heathens, of whom it might be said they were flesh, and not spirit, brutal, but not divine.

3dly, In the sublimity of its stile, see Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, &c.

4thly, In its laws and precepts, calculated as much for the interest of human nature, (both with respect to society and individualls,) as the honours of majesty.

5thly, In their retaling to us impartially, the faults, and blemishes, as well as the virtues, and graces, of its worthies, and here I cannot but think it an ill sign where creatures are dignified with a perfection, they were never invested with, so the turkish prophet, and the popish saints, in whom you read of no defects, hon-

* See DEVIZES.

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ouring and pilgrimaging to whom, they carry a lie in their right hand, but it has been said, there are manifest contradictions in it, so that the real truth, must be with great difficulty ascertained, I must aver, that through due examination, long acquaintance, and proper close conferring, most of those obstacles may be removed, and we may see, with how great curious art, the windings run, and where the regular confusion ends.

To assist in so useful a work, let me offer a helping hand from some impresses on my mind.

First I observe there are some seemingly positive assertions which cannot admit of that arbitrary sense and meaning they seem to convey, as where the Lord says, I will repent of the good, repent of the evil, and yet I am the Lord, I change not, he is of one mind. Now this unchangableness being a standing perfection, cannot be o'erthrown, he repented he made man, what shall we think he did not know what he was about? or how he would turn out, I knew thou would'st deal treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb, known unto God, are all his works from the beginning, his power, that he is great in power; not one faileth. Allmighty, yet we read, I thought to have done a little, but they helped on the affliction and but that I feared the wrath of the enemy, &c.

His holiness,) he is angry with the wicked every day, yet he hath not beheld iniquity in jacob, the times of their ignorance God winked at, what, did he not destroy 'em by thousands for idolatry and murmurings, yes, but has he smitten him as he smote those that smote him? the people perish for want of knowledge, yet he hath compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way. But take it for-granted God cannot cordially embrace what is contrary to his nature, as light cannot accord with darkness. His justice,) a just God and a Saviour, but how can he save the sinner, (which shall die) a just one shall atone, be made sin, help laid on one that is mighty. Blessed device, glorious mystery, to be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly; but he will by no means clear the guilty, but the Lord hath laid on him

the iniquity of us all, he hath magnified his mercy above all his name, his mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, endureth for ever, yet who knoweth the power of his anger, according to his fear, so is his wrath.

Truth,) a God of truth and yet see Ild Chron. Chap. 30th, Verse 2d. the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of the Prophets, and Jeremiah complains, thou hast deceived me, now as he is not a man, viz. a man of honour, who minds not his word or engagements, far be it from perfection itself.

Observe, though his counsels stand, and must: He may appear to act differently towards the world and his creatures, he has willed a change, and suits his way to our creaturely ideas, and concerns. So in the word, if we say we have no sin we lye, yet he that is born of God (as the Apostle says,) cannot commit sin. Now they do not with full consent, are not under its reign, not with allowance, &c. Christ says my Father is greater than I, but cannot any person of reading observe that he was a son, (Heb. 7th, and 28th, the word of the oath which maketh the son,) and servant by engagement, the counsel of peace was betwixt them both, I will declare the decree, (that is the purport?) the Lord hath said thou art my Son, thou art to assume that character, and office, till cometh the end when the mediatorial kingdom shall be delivered up, the sonship be cashier'd and God be all in All.

The Arians will allow, God will not give his glory to another, nay is very jealous of his honour, the Angels rejected divine adoration, see thou do it not, Jesus made lower than the Angels, always accepted it, he, the, worshipped, and they worshipped him, Matt. 28th, 9th V. nay he challenged it, that all men should honour the Son, even as they, (not forasmuch as I heard one read it,) honour the Father.

Now I appeal to them, as great reasoners, if this comports with reason, or common sense, that the one should claim it unless he had thought it no robbery, or that the other should suffer, nay confer, own, joy in it, if he was not equal, where? say they, why first he commands the Angels to worship, Heb. 1st. he shews him prophetically to man, Isaiah 40th, behold your God, for the Lord God will

will come and feed his flock like a shepherd, see John the Xth, and bids the Baptist make in the desert, a highway for God, and that he is indeed the brightness of his glory, compare Isaiah the VIth, I saw the Lord high and lifted up with Seraphims worshipping the Lord of hosts, and with John XIIIth and 41st, as also spake Isaiah when he saw his glory and spake of him, but what does the divine Father speak? exulting, I speak touching the King, gird thy sword on thy thigh, O Almighty, with thy glory and Majesty, and in thy Majesty ride prosperously, for thy throne O God is for ever and ever. Is this the Fathers language? Heb. 1st, but unto the Son he saith? thy throne O God, &c. As I am got in unwarily, I would just ask, pray is a God obliged to exist in one mode or form? because man can't transmigrate himself into various; are our ways, his ways, or can we comprehend him? that moment he ceases to be my Deus, the devoir vanishes, is there not as it were a material Trinity, of one substance yet subsisting in three different conditions. Air feeds fire, issues or erupts in light, this again condenses at the extremity, rushes toward the solar fire, is emitted again in light, the Father as God, is represented as the consuming fire, his wrath is poured out as fire, will ye set bryars and thorns in array against me?

The second person, as the light of the morning, the day spring, I am the light, the third came upon the Apostles as a mighty rushing wind? the Pentecost typify'd by the sounding of trumpets, his influences, breathing upon the plains, coming from the four winds and illustrated by its blowing where it listeth; the Heathens, when they had lost sense of the true and living God, adopted a material trinity, they had, Isaiah 27th Chap. and 9th Verse, Hamenim Images of the sun as the central fire, 11d Kings XXIIIrd Chap. and 10th Verse, Heren the fury or burning, Beth-Horon Josh. XXIst Chap. and 32d Verse, but chiefly emblemized by shor a young Bull's head, hence the golden calf, secondly a temple to the light: Beth-Shemesh, light receding, Shemeshon or Sampson with his seven locks might represent the seven streams of light, between the sun and planetary orbs.

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The third, the Canaanites, Joshua 15th Chap. and 53d Verse, had a temple of that action of the spirit rephoe by which the fire is blown, and fed. Some made the eagle the spirit sacred to apollo the sun junco or jone, in Hebrew a Dove, but this as a sketch, I shall only add the meaness of that low sarcasm of Dr. Clark's, (pray how does little matter, I hope he does not think himself as old as his Father,) it retorts on him who might have known that the Father of eternity, was Isaiah, 9th Chap. 6th Verse, born a Son, a given Son for us, but thus the world by wisdom knows not God.

My second observation by way of direction, enters into the nature of the first, viz fix upon nothing as truth, which is contrary to the nature of the great legislator, thus you will avoid much silly controversy; and a waste of words. Doth a fountain send forth sweet waters & bitter? think in short, he cannot deny himself who is truth, be weak who made us, be ignorant of contingencies who is the only wise, repent who is not man, be all mercy to be a God unjust, or inexorable who magnifies his mercy. As the spirit of God is the inditer, think, that he cannot be yea and nay, rather let us blame our dullness of apprehension; beg that in his light we may see light, and the wondrous things contained in the scriptures of truth.

Thirdly, think all is not Gold that glisters, nor that always to be the truth which gains upon us, error may wear truths coat, and we being dim sighted may give it the blessing of the elder. Many adopt a set of principles, suited to their unenlight'ned judgments, and then search and rake into scripture, (like the hen,) to scratch up here and there a grain of maintainence, for their errors, a thorough knowledge of the truth, gives the freedom of a spacious field, in which the hungry mind may eat and live for ever, a Woman naturally loving and tender, thinks her darling (perhaps both deformed and froward) a fine child, and wonders every one cannot (like her,) admire it. Thus fond, are most, of their imbibed sentiments, and what suits their constitution, for the mind has it as well as the body. Some have very indifferent ones, t'were good to study them; and beg the renewal of a right spirit.

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There is one thing more may be admitted as a rule in some degree, even this, in where far the greatest number of proofs are ranged; take this plain simile. A Farmer orders three servants to go labour on a field in his absence, now two of them understand it of such a particular one; a third upon going, positively asserts the Master meant a different one, now though tis possible one may supersede twenty, yet 'tis more probable that multiplicity of proofs should gain, as in a multitude of Counsellors there is safety: Having finished my few hints drawn out I fear to, too tedious a length, (though I hope not altogether useless,) permit me to point out to you friends and brothers, in what I apprehend your size of mind measures short of the standard of truth, whereby you fall short of that glory of God, and comfort to your selves, I could wish you. And

First of not having proper ideas of the divine sovereignty; in special cases, that God has an absolute right to do what he will with his own, as the Supreme Potter. In temporals you grant, but are nicely tender in eternals, and this mercifull disposition inspire some with the warmest glow of pious resentment towards those who think they have just reason to dissent from them, but my dear warm friends let us consider the days of old and the years of former generations, review the dealings of the Sovereign of the universe, recollect the awfull eternal reprobation of angellic natures, natures I apprehend far more excellent than Adams in Paradise, that passing by those, a Saviour should assume our nature, (like Jacob, fondest of the younger born), say why was Abel directed to typifie the great sacrifice acceptedly when both Brothers were equally, naturally enemies to God.

Wherefore such an amazing distinction of one family spared, in such an universal inundation? of one Lot, out of four cities of the plain, of the Jews being as it were only known of all the families of the earth, to whom appertained the adoption, the giving of the Law, and the promises, the means of nutriment for the divine life, surely the whole earth might have been thus favoured if God had pleased, but he, Psalm 147th and 20th Verse, has not done so with any other nation, hallelujah said

the Church to the divine sovereignty. Again review the conduct of our blessed Lord, he called unto him whom he would, he tells them, ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, to bring forth fruit, and that it should remain, why did so few believe on him. He tells them plainly because ye are not of my sheep, and the Apostle shews the same cause, because it was given to you, not only to believe, &c.

Christ knew from the beginning who they were that would not believe, consequently who he design'd to confer that power upon, namely such as should be born, not of blood, of the will of flesh or man, but of God, doubtless he might have had twelve legions, as well as one dozen of Apostles had he chose. Is it not strange that we never read of Christ's exulting in spirit, but in applauding the divine sovereignty? what is now a-days called horrible blasphemy, I thank thee, &c. Father, &c. viz. His hiding from the wise and prudent, and revealing to babes, is not this sovereignty? nay bids the Disciples rejoice in this point of view more, than in dispossessions of devils, that their names were inrolled, but he met with the same treatment for preaching it, as the gospel ministers now, see Luke IVth and 16th to 30th, consider my friends, you are got in bad company and that can't be a good sign.

But what mostly surprises me is, that some of my old acquaintances whom God evidently distinguished, by calling, and drawing out from a set of abandoned youths from darkness into marvelous light: (Their neighbours in darkness until now,) that such should not own and confess who made them to differ, must it not be either of him that worketh or of him that calleth, I appeal to reason and conscience, but methinks you durst not say I made my self to differ, though you think it partly in others, now is not this a secret lurking falacy, may not our Lord be obliged to say of you as of Ephraim, I taught them also to go leading them by the arm, but they knew not that I healed them, that I more particularly guided their heedless feet into the way of peace, whilst others were left to follow the course of this world, yes I think must say all my thoroughly enlightned friends.

At

At such a sermon why was I inclin'd?
 My friends unmov'd (of a more generous mind),
 Like Pauls companions, whilst my heart-strings break,
 They thunder hear; but not a Saviour speak.

But do I judge wrong that some having experienced the force of the word, instead of giving God the glory of his operating grace, exercised towards them, or upon them, as it may be read, *Isaiah 53d*! too hastily surmise, such force of argument and reasoning might influence every hearer, if it should, or they would, you seeing religion and divine things, in their amiable attractive beauties, think it might appear to every one in the same engaging light, why friends, the Israelites when favoured with the bright side of the cloud, might as well have fancied the Ægyptians could see their way as well as them. Here good Melancton stumbled, who thought to go out and convert the world, but found old Adam too hard for young Melancton, this is not quite foreign from my own young experience, seeing Men as trees walking, but if the experience of above forty years may add any weight being put into this gospel scale, I aver that from observation and being conversant with persons, and things, I have found, and do more and more find, that all things are of God, and that as in the order of nature, motion comes from impulse, and action transpires from thought, so God works first to will, than to do, and that agreeable to his good pleasure, therefore must sing and wish you to join in the chorus.

Victorious grace, did't thou my will encline,
 Oh grace victorious all the praise be thine.
 That e'er I sought, knew, lov'd ador'd and bless'd, }
 Was thine my God, all thine from first to last,
 And shall be through eternity confess'd. }

Peruse with candour, the confessions, of Prophets,
 Apostles, Martyrs, and through this cloud of witnesses,
 view Jesus, as the author and finisher of faith.

And don't write us uncharitable, inhuman, and injurious to our fellows, because we dare not speak wickedly for God, I solemnly declare for my self and most of my
 calvinistic

calvenistic acquaintance, that we wish the salvation of all, were it the Sovereign pleasure, but action shews the purport of the mind, God's thoughts and ways, are above ours, who giveth none account, rather let our wills be resolved into his most holy and wise purposes, who knows to clear himself, and will do right, should we not think it impertinence. Could we suppose some seraph (from natural affection for some of his fal'n inmates), should tax his Maker with dealing hardly with them, either in his suffering them to fall, or consigning them over to eternal perdition, a incongruous would it be in me to assert that his late Majesty had as compassionate a respect for Kilmarnock as Cromarty, when their different fates glaringly evidenced the contrary.

Secondly), there seems to be an unacquaintedness both with the nature, and terms of the covenant of grace, the covenant of peace, and redemption between the Father and the Son, 'tis rarely if ever mentioned as though unscriptural, when it so much abounds with it.

Read Zech. 6th, 12th and 13th. Isaiah, 42d to 8th Verse, the engagements on both sides, the plan, the effect of this covenant, I will declare the decree, ask of me, I will give thee the heathen, if thou wilt make thy Soul an offering for sin, thou shalt see thy seed, I give thee for a covenant or purifier to the Gentiles, he shall see of the travel of his Soul, &c.

This surety remonstrates, who hath believed, &c. Jehovah's arm upon whom revealed, I said I have laboured in vain, no, because a nation that knew thee not shall run unto thee, why? because of the Lord thy God, then he says, lo I come, I looked and there was no Man, no Intercessor, therefore he lays down his life for the Sheep, agreeable to the former, of which Christ says no Man can come unto me except the Father draw him, and how does he it, why thy People shall be made willing in thy day of power, a seed shall serve thee, booked down to Adonai my Lord, and he calls for a note of admiration, behold me and the children whom God hath given me. they shall be for signs, &c.

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those whom thou hast given me, be with me, I pray for them, (not for the world,) &c. I would ask, have those words any meaning? are they not plain English? If I am deluded, I must discard all at once, and be sure of nothing I read, but as words are formed to convey ideas, and are just to their trust, I must take e'm as they lye before me, and the scripture cannot be broken.

God said I have made a covenant with my chosen, now this covenant was opened, and shewn before the conditions were fulfilled. The purport is somewhat shewn, Psalm 89th, David knew the secret of the Lord was with them that feared him, and that he would shew them his covenant, I have thought it a little odd that God should shew a thing which never existed, but in calvinistic whimsies, but 'tis said there is a covenant betwixt God and the Creature and conditions in it, I allow there are qualifications but can find no conditions but on God's part, for a person once broke, and having no stock of his own, may not prudentially be trusted. Those requisites or qualifications God has promised to implant, Jeremiah 31st Chap. and 34th Verse, Heb. 8th Chap. and 10th Verse, I have oft' admired how concisely Gabriel opened the plan to the Virgin, and how it guards against our modern foolish objections, as to his name, Jesus a Saviour, not a half Saviour, save his People, why all the World is his, no; I pray not for, &c. but for them, given me out of the World, redeemed from among Men. Why then as they must be saved they may live as they list, they are safe, no! saved from their sins, I really wonder where Mens senses are, or what they dream about to bring up such stale, (I won't call e'm objections,) childish reveries, when the Gospel so clearly maintains it's dignity, and so plainly points out a plan so honourable to God, so safe for Man. What a fitness of things, that the method of recovery should tend to hide pride from Man, what provision in this covenant for God's honour and his Peoples good, redeemed from all iniquity, to be zealous of good works.

Elect through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of

the truth, thus appears a beautiful connection in the building from the corner or foundation stone, up through the living structure, till the head stone be brought forth with shouting Grace, Grace unto it.

My young friends I hope most of you are born to rise, see an estate devolved, writings drawn, desire you not to know it? I don't think you will be forward to sell your birthright, but you can't rejoice that your names are written in Heaven, never to be cancelled. He that knows not he is an heir, can adopt few ideas better than servile, arise and eat the good of the land, and let your Souls delight themselves in fatness, for while you are all uncertainty, and live so much at your own keeping, you cannot so much experience the tender faithfulness of a Father, the constancy of a Spouse, and the unchangeableness of a God.

Thirdly, I doubt whether you (in general,) are quite clear with respect to the terms of acceptance in the sight of God; do you firmly believe and acknowledge, that you are accepted, only in the beloved? on the account of his active and passive obedience; his magnifying the law, and making it honourable, and that God is well pleased with you, only for his righteousness sake. 'Tis an important query where-with shall I come before the Lord? but the answer is pertinent and directory, he hath shewed thee this good, or as one reads it, the good one, whom (as saith the Apostle,) God hath set forth as a propitiation, (as the serpent was exhibited in the wilderness.) Hearken ye stout hearted, though far from righteousness I bring near my righteousness; what his moral rectitude as deity? no, that would consume us, but his robe wrought out that being put on, surely one yea, all may say in the Lord have I righteousness, and I greatly rejoice, because he has clothed me with his robe of righteousness, and therefore this is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness, but more surprising, she shall be called the Lord, &c. Jeremiah 33d, but how so? why I apprehend as the Bride is called the Lamb's wife, she takes part of her husband's name, has a new name, we find this righteousness imputed, for as
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the Messiah was cut off, but not for himself; so he brought in everlasting righteousness; not for himself, for he was made sin for us, (who knew no sin) that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, methinks the natural relation of the fall has some reference this way! we find our first Parents sewing fig-leaves, but the coverings were too short, and narrow to enwrap them, therefore the Lord God made coats of skin and cloaths them, thus Christ of God is made unto us righteousness.

See how it accords? but my dear friends, do you ever triumph in this righteousness, do you speak of it all the day, any part of it? I wish it might be so! God is well pleased for it, and shall it not be glorious in our eyes, suffer a word of reproof.

It is asserted that in him shall all the spiritual seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory. The Apostles creed runs thus, to worship God in spirit, to rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, those only are of the true circumcision. I have sometimes been lost in divine amaze! to think a God should live for me, leave the inconceivable extasie of intimacy with the divine Father, the inexpressible glories of his eternity, for this base, inclement, barbarous world, to adopt the low claimants of wretched man, to hunger who had the cattle upon a thousand hills, thirst, who had the best wine at command, nay rivers of pleasures at his right hand, but thus it behoved him to fulfill all righteousness.

Now this is called a gift, a free gift, what are we thinking of, or do we think at all? shall a God be at so much expence for what we so lightly esteem, or coldly accept; wonder oh Heavens! [forgive the exclamation,] I am just lost in surprize at my self and others! need I say more to endear this plan to you, I hope not, surely did we know the plague of our own hearts, and the infinite holiness of God; we should beg him only to look upon this shield, and the face of his anointed, in whom justice and truth, are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Thus Zion is redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness,

ousness, thus he restored that which he took not away Psalm 69th, 4th Verse, another thing.

Fourthly, [wherein I apprehend a failure,] is a misapprehension of the nature, and quality of Grace, as a principle, now you will readily agree with me that God is the author, the God of all Grace, Patriot, Patron, now must not our reason allow? that nothing imperfect or capable of corruptibility or failure can proceed from him, whose gifts, and callings, are without repentance! and whose works and ways are perfection! how then can that perish in or from the Soul, which in its own nature is immortal? our Lord gives the emblems to represent matters of fact.

The Mustard Seed—springing, branching, to extention,
The Leaven,—stirring, working, to perfection.

Water—bubbling, rising, spouting, exuberance. Farther, whilst Man emits corruptible seed, shall not a God incorruptible? that liveth and abideth for ever? 'tis asserted that of his own will, begat he us, by the word of truth. And this word in the hand of the spirit, is never void, or abortive; always accomplishes the end propos'd, and does not this emblem, naturally convey the idea of our Being passive? common sense must give it: Since we are entirely so, with reference to natural births and infinite wisdom, would not give incorrect, improper emblems. Again, born not of the will of the flesh, Man, &c. But of God.

'Tis evident that God's plan is to thwart Satan's, and as far as he has design'd it, he certainly will, I came to destroy the works, &c.

But it does not appear that he propos'd, or purposes, to do it in every one, but his Sheep shall never perish: He cannot be the Author of that faith he finishes not, did he leave his rising structure to be demolish'd, how might Satan cajole, this one began to build, but was not able to finish. But a God cannot but count the cost.

No Man would be baulk'd or disappointed of his intended views, could he help it, and shall not Heaven fulfill all its pleasures? were it not weakness to suppose
the

the contrary. In the view of apparent failures: observe the different lodgments of the seed of the word.

Thorns shall choak, if the Husbandman gather e'm not, Satan's fowls shall garner them, if God drive not away. Persecutions Sun shall blast or burn up, if fructifying faith be not given, to suffer for his sake. Thus Demas hath forsaken, having loved the world.

Many of his Disciples went back, walked no more with him. But what says the Apostle! they went out from us, because they were not of us, or they doubtless had remain'd. So that final falling is easily accounted for, where no depth of Earth detains, and strong faith gets no sure hold.

See Saul, and Balaam, and Judas, whom God indulg'd with a tast of the Heavenly gift, but of how little Grace ye are judges. But genuine Christians drink into one spirit, and lo! out of their bellies flow rivers of living Water. May I not enforce the Saviour's words on you, O! ye of little faith, wherefore do you doubt? why not give God credit, when such finews of support are furnish'd out? yea all that might tempt, and engage belief. The Mountains shall depart, &c. I have set thee as a Seal, graven thee on the palms of my Hands, lov'd with an everlasting love, thy Maker is thy Husband, who hateth putting away, rejoice that your names are written in Heaven, yet how small cause, if a creaturely relapse might soon erase it. But he remaineth faithfull, though we change, he cannot deny himself, he betroths to himself with judgment, as well as loving-kindness, and those shall not only know the Lord, but follow on to know him; he preserveth the Souls of his Saints, (as was foretold by the Angel of him,) saves his people from their sins, which he could not do, if they return'd to their old full dominion over them.

Whether the present rejection of the Jews, may typifie that state of Soul the Christian sometimes experiences, on account of sin, when under divine withdrawments, he cries out, as one cut off, cast away, dried up, buried in death, yet concerning such, thus saith the Lord, behold I will open your graves, and

cause you to come forth, and they witness to a restoring of Soul, a leading in the paths of righteousness for his name and promise sake, as doubtless shall the Jews when they are ingrafted again, and shall seek after the Lord and David their King.

David, Heman, Jonah, Peter, give attestation to a truth, (to say at least,) how thoughtlessly disregarded if not discarded, the last of which avers, that no Scripture is of private interpretation, but what Jehovah said to Joshua, he speaks to every Christian, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, be assured then with the Apostle Paul, that neither life, nor death, things present, or to come, height, or depth, Heaven, or hell, shall separate from this love, for he is not the Son of Man, that he should repent, whose gifts and callings are without it, I name not Scripture places, but the sentences are connect, the Lord bless e'm to you, with a heart connection.

The fifth and last thing is, an irreconcilable aversion to the thought, of the possibility of the failings and sins of Christians, either to work for their good, or the glory of God. I hope this springs from an inveterate hatred to sin, which I durst not but approve, yet know, that God's thoughts and ways, does not always tally with our views and conception of things. Even as to their fitnesses, yet must not this riddle be solved: Though like Sampson's, it may be proved: How out of the eater, may come forth meat, and from the strong, sweetness. In this methinks you evidence a partial acquaintance with Scripture, and the wisdom and power of God, who does really make all things work together for Good, for those who are the called according to his purpose. Must the spots of God's Children, mark them for Satan's vassals? and is perfection the only true badge of christianity? I judge the mark is miss'd.

A David can complain, iniquities prevail against me, a Paul that he is sold under sin, yet both can advert: My transgressions thou shalt purge, and thanks be to God, who giveth victory. Eyes pointed inward, can see nought in the Shulamite, but a company of two Armies. Imagine that as much time had elaps'd e'er the Prophet
Ezekiel

Ezekiel was led into the chambers of imagery. So 'tis more advanced light, which discovers the latent, lurking, filth of the Soul. Let me confess freely (for others profit, and self humiliation,) that near forty Years ago, reading, Mr. Erskine assert that God might even bring a Christian so low, as to make him thankful he had a grain of Grace left, my then (favour'd, but too unguarded,) unexperienc'd, Heart reply'd, sure I shall never be brought so low as this, but have found it a great truth, who like the Children of Israel, have been led about, to humble, and to prove: I trust also to the appendage.

To do thee good in thy later end, indeed the Israelites did little else but sin, and fight, fight, and sin, all the way to Canaan, (how just the resemblance.) God was to put out the Nations before them by little and little.

Oh say some, you are patronizing sin: Stand by, I am holier than thou, that's well, so much the better, I do really think I am the worst in the world, and am just going to tell the world, in two instances, my real thoughts, the first is in a short extempore litany, the next in an epitaph, (which as I think the world won't allow to be engrav'd when I'm dead, am willing to give e'm whilst alive.)

The First.

From world sin, Satan, Lord deliver me,
And from my self, far worse than all the three.

And now for my Epitaph.

If some frail flate, these dull remains should hide,
When it has told the world, how soon I dy'd,
This trite confession, it may make beside. }

HERE I FALL,

Less than something, worse than nothing,

GOD IS ALL.

To return, I durst venture to say with a Divine, that better is the sin, that makes us humble, than the duty, which makes us proud. And that God permits his People, to fall into sin, for their good, and others too: I think

think I can prove: 'Tis sometimes in Religion as in nature. A burn'd Child dreads the fire, and sometimes a forward froward Child, by a shrew'd fall, by fearing to leave its guide, often, saves many a bruise. Yet say not I would countenance sin, for though it may not throw out of favour, yet there is a rod in the covenant promised, and in what ever shape it comes, does often so twinge, and torture, that hell only can equal it.

An Apothecary cannot be said to recomend poison for diet, though he should assure you, (that in his medical way,) he finds it requisite as a mixture, even for establishing a better regimen of health, and now forgive me, if I instance in a few kindly properties.

Ist, when the sins of others, grieve you on God's account.

Ild, when those are a glass, in which you see your own wicked heart, but especially, when your own sins, are made a burden to you, and you are made to cry for deliverance, when their prevalence, drives you to the power of God.

Ild, when sins shade, more illustrates Christs beautiful picture, and its sting nails you to the brazen Serpent, when the rod incites, a fear to offend, and causes a diviner participation of God's holiness.

I deny not, but our artfull enemy, who has a variety of strings to his bow, may urge some to sin, that Grace may abound, as well as secretly puff up some, (strictly religious,) to an almost imperceptible self applause: and a half, trusting to some-what else, besides Christs complete, and perfect, righteousness for acceptance. For what shapes cannot this infernal proteus assume, who could plead Scripture, even to Christ himself, and some tempt, even from the safety of their state. Such are his depths, and such our frailty, the good Lord make sin in all its shapes, and colourings, detestable; and may his divine beauty be upon us, till we wake fully in his likeness, Amen.

Just as I was finishing this friendly essay, a few checks subscrib'd, I F came to view, and by a cursory glance, observing some things, I judg'd Exceptionable, have made

made free to animadvert a little, the justness of my remarks, I submit to your judgment, and now you must bear with me, if (as a hunter upon the chase, sometimes rides over his neighbours fields.) I in pursuit of truth, should sometimes bear hard upon your attachments and connections, and so probably on tempers, and constitutions.

I confess, I never saw (what I dupe for,) error better dress'd, and though truth is buried by the Author, he has indulg'd her, with a very fragrant funeral, such a variety of rhetorical flowers, that I am perswaded she won't soon sink, though in some places, he has I fear expos'd her.

First, he asserts that Mr. W——y, like a true Son of the Church, and like an honest Man, has so subscrib'd the 17th Article, as not to reject the 31st, what's this? who knows not but they are to subscribe to them all. He might have said, that a subscribing to a thing, is an open declaration of assent, and consent, and by the compilers, was intended without equivocation, or mental reservation, and that he acknowledgeth all, and every of the Articles therein contained, to be agreeable to the word of God.

Methinks this little word (so) wears an equivocal aspect, so, that is either as it was, or was not, not as it was, or is, honestly, his sentiments and exhibitions having been quite opposite. As it was not—that it was not, there so in his view as specify'd, but at best, there must be some imposition on the Reverend compilers, and were they living now, would put the 5th Canon, in force, against some persons, which in brief runs thus, if they think any part erroneous, or such as they may not with a good conscience, subscribe unto, let them be excommunicated.

IPSO FACTO.

An odd mark of a true Son of the Church, for a genuine Son, to deceive its Mother, nor can such, (however they would be thought) be said, to be in full communion. 'Twere well not to stand condemn'd, nor condemn our selves, in things we allow.

The next thing, is a sort of a negative excellence, he is none of those, that put a note of admiration on distinguishing

tinguishing Grace, why me! viz. He is not a Jacob, a David, or a Paul. See Gen. 32d Chap. 9th and 10th Verse, David's, what am I! and Paul's, un'o me less than the least, to reveal his Son, in me, I judge nearly Tantamount. He knew, what was thunder, to his bloody minded companions, was a converting voice to him. I find perhaps a dozen of my neighbours on each side of me, carnal, unwak'ned. The Lord hath given me true faith, genuine repentance, light to judge the different estates and cases of others; may I not exclaim with the pious Watts, (should it be modern refinement.)

Why was I made, to hear thy voice, and enter, whilst theres room when Thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come, nay were it not culpable to overlook it, shall the divine spirit evidence, and witness the sonship: And the Soul disregard. After God had reminded the Children of Israel of his former affection, he rejoins, wilt thou not from this time, cry unto me? my Father, &c. If an offended Prince, receives a few of his rebellious Subjects into favour, and perhaps some of the worst, would not each, for himself, particularly wonder at the distinguishing act? Now this you know is the case, with all whom the Spirit truly convinces, to adjudge themselves the worst; which is indeed a beauty, and the fitness of things, and from this view cannot but admire, sovereign, distinguishing Grace. Methought I just heard the penitent thief exclaiming, why me! but I may be fancifull sometimes.

But the goodness of God he says leads, (not drags,) can he split the hair betwixt drawing, and dragging? it may convey an idea of rather more force exerted, but not more than Scripture warrants, Christ positively asserts, we cannot come without drawing, and the spirit in Paul adverts, that it is the exceeding greatness of his power, working, mightily, in them that believe, and when God says, I drew them with cords, and bands, it cannot but imply such backwardness and obstinacy, as requires irresistible Grace, (as much as this term is scoff'd and jeer'd at,) to accomplish, nay as it has just occur'd to me what Mr. W——y has pray'd for, "and force them to be sav'd by Grace."

Agreeable

Agreeable to what the divine Father promis'd v. Messiah, thy People shall be willing, in the Day of thy power, but adjures him to gird on his sword, or make bare his arm, for conquest. But why this N. B. I don't remember in the course, of five and forty Years attendance on the word, to have heard a Calvinist use the phrase; but this is one of his own merry thoughts. You'll hear him perhaps at Madeley, exclaiming, that he is ty'd and bound, with the chains of his sins, the Lord loose the prisoner, though he should drag till he break the chain: But this should convince him, that he is not a free moral agent. If we have lost the power of obeying, God has not lost of commanding. And as (foolish) as it is in him, may and does use this as a means, to slay the sinner, he intends to save. How evident this in Paul's case, and christian experience, to hide pride from Man. A Lord may challenge his Steward for spent Money, and degrade him, for the greater illustration of forgiving Grace, but if earthly families fall short, let him think, this may be one of those ways of Deity sublime to ours, nor rashly charge him foolishly.

At page 18, it should seem the Prophets, Christ, and his Apostles, knew nothing of particular Election, efficacious Grace, perseverance, &c. those few obscure controverted points.

But the Calvinists run into refinements, unknown to those ancient Gentlemen, I think I have known my Bible near as long as this Gentleman, and though no Scholar, have been open and free for divine teachings, and think if plain English is to be read, and understood, I could quote upwards of two hundred plain proofs for each, in our Data, all Doctrines, according to godliness.

But what is written in the word, how readeth he? nay how counteth this spiritual Arithmetician, bear with me if I judge the divine spirit has not as yet, led him into all truth, since he so mutilates, and mars that Gospel provision which has prov'd the life and nourishment of Millions of Saints, aver'd by their last breathing testimonies.

But

But he tells us that Mr. W — y, did assert to last Spring, Mans utter inabillity to do any thing as of himself, and the absolute necessity of the Grace and spirit of God, to raise, even a good thought, or desire in our hearts; why is not Mr. W — y, a Calvinist? what am I about? I should have added, the blood and righteousness of Christ, being the sole meritorious cause of our Salvation. Here's for you, 'twere pity he had not held fast the form of sound words, but suffer the Summer Sun to blast. Another partial censure, his imputing the fornication and falshood of some professors, to an election, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth. A Being chosen to be holy, and without blame; a Being called (not to uncleanness,) but to holiness.

Shall their ignorance of its true disposition, or a following their corrupt inclinations, contaminate the divine decrees, as well may we reject every ordinance, because there will be allways hypocrites, and false professors join, or chide the Sun for shining on a dunghill, since the effluvia is ingratefull though the ray is unblemish'd.

But knows he not the remarkable sanctity of a Paul, James, John, and the ancient Puritans, I dare say fifty to one, who liv'd and dy'd a credit to their profession, and at this time to my knowledge, numerous in LONDON, who evidence how far those Gospel truths influence the divine life, so that this straying Swallow, shall not dupe a Summer, or yet will he assert such an one irrecoverably lost, or that God can bring no good, from such apparent evil. I have read of a Prince, who forgave twice, his Language was, first, a Rebel, next a Traitor, I pardon, but henceforward, let an eternal amity subsist, this he won, so overpower'd the Souls susceptible Faculties, he commenc'd all fidelity.

I think he need not have mention'd there being but a step between high arminanism, and self righteousness, I believe they lodge on the same floor, not on the foundation, nor that next the Sky. Here is likewise high Calvinism, (that's very high,) why? is not Calvins Institutions, Calvins Institutions; and apostolic Institutions, from the

the divine unerring spirit, what does Calvin say on this point: That the Apostle does not say? but 'tis easier to call him, an Antinomian, then to prove him so.

Again, when he attempts to paliate for Mr. W——y's not mentioning the blood and righteousness of Christ, in his minutes, I think he had better been silent, for He would have thought it a great omission, who resolv'd to make mention of his righteousness and of his only, nay, to talk of it all the Day, nor know to quit the subject, and where this is left out, and Mans recommended, to a Christian auditory, it wears no good aspect,—since,

If God's foundation don't appear. we build but Castles in the Air. And as I have mention'd the minutes, forgive me, if I spend one moment, in informing you, how they appeared to me.

The first directory very commendable, take heed to your doctrine, "we have leaned too much toward calvinism," viz. He among the rest: Now, I don't know in what point of view, some might behold his standing, but the quick sighted Calvinists, always thought he lean'd the other way, and I must say this, for most I have heard this forty Years, that if they chanc'd to stumble upon a calvinistic principle, (as though conscious of a slip,) a sudden spring has recovered their native footing: "If a Man is not faithfull in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches."

Now, I don't think God ever said so, though it is said we ought to assert it from God, he asks us indeed how he can do it, but God knows how, and has done it in three instances, which just occurs to thought. Matthew, and Zacheus, two Publicans, both of a cheating trade and the thief upon the cross, two noted for extortion, and unfaithfulness, and the other, for downright dishonesty, to those mercy and Salvation were shewn, yea committed, even the true riches, of Grace and glory. How many has Grace found in these forty Years. (Prodigals mispending their time, talents, riches, &c.) in high-ways, & hedges, & has been compelled to come in? or their straggling feet, had eternally stumbled upon the dark mountains. As God works both to will, & to do, whom he makes willing,

does by that power improve, not (but as I observ'd before,) the law may be presented, and is often deputed a School-Master. to bring us to Christ, and many things may be urged to the carnal, which is evidently their duty, as creatures. Such as prayer, and praise, attending the Sanctuary, which doing, though there is not an absolute promise of acceptance, there's a gracious hint, who-so findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour.

But does not our Lord exhort to work, labour, earnestly for enduring meat? he did I judge, for four reasons.

Ist, He knew the food of the Soul was infinitely preferable.

IId, That they might be led to reflect on spiritual, or soul indigencies.

IIId, As a reproof to those that followed him for the Loaves.

And lastly, as his chosen among them, might be directed to cleave to him, as the true Bread, and say Lord evermore give us this Bread.

There was an enquiry by a Legalist, what shall I do, that I might work, the work of God; now in order to put him out of his wrong notion, Christ says, this is the work of God, that ye believe, yet well knowing he could not himself believe, because Given to believe; now working for life, must be a working for faith, without which, it is impossible to please God, and working for something, pre-supposes something to be paid for the work. But faith was never consider'd as a debt, but a gift, and given to him that worketh not, not him that believeth, but in order to believing.

Those that would work for life, he sends to the Law, to try, but as there is no law that can give life, he must be in this case, the last resource; for we would all be trimmers, though he exclaims, wherefore gad ye about to change your way? and often chuses to make us weary in the greatness of our way, that he may be apply'd to, who is the way, truth and life.

Alas, that Men should naturally want to be doing, though like young Children, they do nothing but mischief, thus therefore the working for the inheritance of
eternal

eternal life was to believe, but as the very plowing of the wicked is sin, those dead works cannot avail, nor need methinks the Soul to work for what is given it. But

3dly, "A Man is to do nothing in order to justification, nothing can be more false," does he mean justification before Men? I join him, shew me thy faith by thy works. But I find 'tis in order to find favour with God, here's one truth, I believe we hold: it is God that justifieth, but see a contrary evidence, being justify'd freely by his Grace; so this is a gift, and the free gift came upon all, (viz. all that are justify'd) to justification of life, to him that worketh not, but believeth, (through faith given,) this is counted for righteousness. God must justify, either for something done by us, in us, or for us, not by us, for by the works of the Law, no flesh living shall be justify'd, nor by faith considered as a work, wrought in, for it is through the Redemption of Christ, faith only an instrument. Faith sanctifies, qualifies, and makes meet for glory. But God is well pleased for (His) righteousness sake, who magnified the Law, and made it honourable, accepted in the beloved.

We are legally and spiritually dead, what can a dead Man do towards his revival in justification? Indeed Mr. W——y well says, God can Circumcise his heart to love him, take away the stone, give a new heart, &c. Yes this comports with the idea that we are passive, but is it Mans working in order to find favour? review the whole affair.

"But who of us is now accepted with God"? why, I dare say none that durst imagine he can join any thing, with the seamless robe of a Redcmers righteousness; none that can't make mention of; and triumph in it: But Mr. F——r says common sense dictates, that a Rebel must first lay down his arms, before he should receive a pardon from his Prince; I judge that God's ways are even — above common sense in some measure, if he justifies the ungodly, 'tis before they ground their arms, I said unto thee, live in thy blood, Ezek. 16th Cha. 6th Verse.

Pray what had become of Adam? had God waited for

his penitence? he graciously put up with his insults, waited to be gracious, till the exalted Prince, gave him repentance.

The King offer'd at the feast; sent out servants: But they all with one consent, (all of a kidney,) excus'd, did our Saviour mean any thing here? is there no analogy?

"But who among those that never heard of Christ? I shall answer as Peter's Master did to such another over-curious question? what is that to us, follow ye me, and not forget to pray for them, that there is no other name given among Men is enough for us, make thy calling and election sure."

"Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition." I read of qualifications, I have ordained you to bring forth fruit, John 15th, I will, and you shall, (covenant Terms.)

"What have we then been disputing about, these thirty Years? why I fear there has been an attempt to dress error in truths coat, and should you rob her, I hope to prefer old naked truth, even though fallen in our Streets, but it is more than (bare words,) 'tis doctrines, essentials, food, cloathing, happiness, eternal life.

If Mr. W——y believes the same with all the cloud of Witnesses, Martyrs, Confessors, Assemblies of Divines, &c. why should he put so many plain hearted Christians, (by odd expressions) to the pain of thinking he differed materially from them, it must (at least) be a very whimsical turn he has: but more so to draw in, so many adherents, both to speak like him, and vindicate him in it.

As to merit; 'tis the last of my thoughts, to have it in any creaturely shape, the radiance of a Redeemers, will absorb every ignis fatuus, an earthly vapour has little share with noontide blaze.

"But does not talking of a justify'd, or sanctify'd state, tend to mislead Men to trust in what has been done in one moment?"

I answer that talking of a perfectly sanctify'd state, has mislead many contrary to the light of the Testimony, to their own disgrace. But that it has been the custom of Believers to talk of, and triumph in imputed righteousness

righteousness I have before shewn: And that all Lives Day, and if some talk as should not talk, I must with him deplore it, observing with him, * in case of rejection, at this rate we must give up the Bible, for the Socinians receive it.

In one moment, whether God takes moments in his acts of justifying, I won't say, but I have read of one, whose justification and sanctification both, does not appear to have been many minutes about, I mean the honest Thief. It seems hard trusting to what God, does for us, and in us, though his Spirit witnesses it.

But there is one bold stroke, I had like to have miss'd; In which he has not been afraid to offend, against the generation of the righteous.

"Calvinists in practice," viz. Loose Antinomians, I judge he had better been Tongue ty'd than have given it such base play, as his conscience must whisper, its knowledge of many who has, and does now transpire, the excellent of the earth, who like Moses standing in the gap, has warded off Brittanias deserved stroke.

"We are every hour, and every moment, (pleasing or) displeasing to God, according to our works." Now I deny not, but with respect to Man, this is the general result, and the idea with respect to God, seems form'd for proper use. But is it agreeable with his nature, (who is of one mind) to give him creaturely changes? He cannot but hate sin, but he knoweth our frame, why on this view, such a poor, weak, guilty, forgetful, foolish, creature as Man, as the best of Men, must be always keeping him on the fret, but though we change, he remaineth faithfull, betroth'd with judgment, as well as with loving kindness, as I have heard a Man say, I know'd my Wife's temper before I had her, but there, I lik'd her.

Knowing the end from the beginning, God has appointed, and in the fitness of time and things, gives the kiss, the frown, the smile, and the rod.

The Canticles I take to be a typical representation of the love, conduct, and carriage, of the heavenly Bridegroom, towards his Bride, the Church. This I

* Mr. F——r. think

think is generally agreed upon. Now observe, though she complains of withdrawments, and her own unkind carriage, the divine lover never hints a foregoing, his fix'd esteem, his unalienable affection, he leaves her to cure her of her sloth, suffers the Watchman to smite her, snatch the veil she would skreen her dishabille under, but not a word of severe reproach. Many waters cannot quench his love, nor was hers froze, whose heart was still awake, thus this King of glory, passes by a transgression, which wins on the generous soul, far more than the austere, or sower severe. Yet knows to keep the Majesty of his perfections, and government, respectable, without the low redress of being almost always out of temper. Nor does those unparalel'd endearments in language, and affection, tend to make the Bride desert her Lover, and become a prostitute to every random woe. No she holds him fast, and will not let him go, begs to be set as a seal, nor traverses the wilderness without him, yea cites an eternity, to rivet the stable link.

“ But it is according to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour.” I judge he means the main scope (with the Apostle,) when he says, for the sins of the whole world, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one, &c. and that by our, he means head and members of the community, now I have too much charity to think them wholly bad, and perhaps too little to think them wholly good, since the holy spirit, in the wisest Man declares, there is none that liveth, and sinneth not, or if he means the whole of life's Day, at the close of which, he is only sure, either eternally to have or lose. He might read that the foundation of God standeth sure, and so seal'd that no intruders, or cavillers, can blot or erase it, the Lord knoweth them that are his, he knew how treacherously they would deal, and was called transgressors from the womb, says I know my Sheep, and am known of them, I scarce durst add, he hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob: And thou art all fair my Love, there is no spot in thee; (for poor Dr. Crispe's sake.) But if the Lord is pleas'd to love a soul, because he will, I think he knows what he is about; and I know not any business the most perfect Creature, has

with it. But to rejoice in the heights, and adore the depths. My Friends may not this be one instance, in which God's ways are above ours?

Hath not "Mr. W——y asserted for these forty years steadily, that all power to think a good thought, much more to will, or do, is from God, by meer Grace, & that his Sermons, and tracts will prove it? why, here I am set fast again, but should he play at fast, and loose, or imprudently blow heat, and cold, out of the same mouth, like the friendly savage, I fear I must turn upon him. Did I profess God did all in, and for me, I durst not so inconsistently burlesque his everlasting love, and execrate my self, if the general scheme were not true, though more modestly sometimes he begs to be heard, if God approves of his notion of universal Grace, and that he would speak the approbation to his Soul, yes makes a poor sinner beg hard for a quick'ning spirit, and the spirit of power, to be sent down from on high, and promises perseverance to the Christian,

In him a pure River of Life shall arise,
Shall in the believer, spring up to the Skies.

Again, if thou wilt the sinner have, thou canst work the will in me, very right, but alas, non nemo contradictio.

"Whether I repent, or no, I may repent and live. If this is consent, I refer to your judgement? I little thought to have gain'd this length, have been oblig'd to curtail sentences, and yet see matter for more Animadversions, a word or two more I hope you will excuse.

Mr. F——r insinuates that free distinguishing love, and favour, has a natural tendency to work disesteem and ingratitude.

I only suppose in his course of ministerial Life, he might have been bless'd with some Patron or Patroness, who engag'd to be a friend, to him as long as he liv'd; now I think so charitably of him, that he would not willingly affront: far less ungratefully treat, such open unmerited goodness. But the poor favour'd Calvinist, it seems, is almost oblig'd to prove that ingrate. What? cannot

cannot calvinistic faith work by love? and purify the heart, and fill with good fruits, he knows it has, and does. I'd almost forgot, "whether I repent or no, I may repent and live, viz. it is in my power, at my option if I chuse, vastly pretty! not if it please God to incline me, and make me willing, that were antinomianism.

Now my Friends, I appeal to your experience, (you that have known the plague of your own hearts,) I can't help here observing what a distinguishing proof this, of Solomons insight.] If you don't think there was a natural aversion in you to God, and his ways, I know many of you have confess'd it, have you made your selves to differ? take the lead in Heaven, but don't mar the song, unto him that loved us, &c. but I judge you recede. No, nor can all the moral swasion, however pathetic, and enforced avail, till God opens the heart. Admit this very plain simile, I know a Friend greatly averse to Cheese, I reason on its usefullness for digestion, its composition of fat'ning Cream, &c. &c.

'Tis vain babling, his stomach is shut against it, and none but the God of nature can open, or remove the aversion. A vehement Preacher may exclaim, sinner! Christ stands at the door of thy heart, and knocks, open to him, believe in him, thou may'st this moment, he has dy'd for thee, redeem'd thee, the poor creature has something else to do, unbelief has barr'd the door, till he comes, who openeth, and no Man shutteth, and by the exceeding, irresistible, greatness of his power, works mightily in him to believe. The hearers can't find faith, are perhaps somewhat alarm'd, and are encourag'd to run about to work, when it is actually the gift of God.

What then say you is the end of preaching? and the duty of sinners? 'Tis the duty of Creatures, to attend their Sovereign's appointments, as they can't be happy separate from their Maker: Some find him there, and find Life: And after all the noisy bufiles of controversy, checks on one side, and spurs on the other, to turn folks round, till they are giddy. It appears to reason, experience, and common sense, that the word read, or heard, is generally the mean of awakening, and converting.

After

After that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your Salvation. That this is fast'ned in a sure place, by the Master of assemblies: There he calls whom he has predestinated, and when the enmity is slain, the will and affections turn'd for God, there's a cry after him, he hears; a longing he satisfies: The Soul is chang'd into his image: (is adopted for his,) And partakes his Glory.

And was it possible for me to be more confirm'd, I freely confess, I see more evident incontestable, evidence, of the truths asserted in the natural unfeigned confessions, and experiences of two or three good old Women, lately converted, taught of God, work'd into his likeness, and the spirit of the Gospel, than in many laboured Treatises: And which the deepest cutting rhetorical figures can't erase.

The word, All, so tortur'd into some confessions, or work'd in the fire of contention, can't possibly bear the weight (as a nail,) so many imprudently hang upon it, well I wot it was never fast'ned by the Master of assemblies, nor deliver'd in the sense urg'd, by the one Shepherd. I can produce more than a dozen places, where Arminius himself, would confess its failure; let three or four suffice, see Matthew 2d, Herod troubled, and all Jerusalem with him, what? and tidings of great Joy to all People, Luke 15th Cap. 1st Verse. All the Publicans and Sinners to hear him. All shall know him, from the greatest to the least, I wish it true in an unlimited sense, was it God's pleasure, friends let matters of fact, be your foundation, actions speak, he bore the sins of many, gave his Life a ransom for many, himself for all to be testify'd in due time. Redeem'd from among Men, out of every kindred and nation, &c. You see this will bear, juts with observation, if you read Men and things, and would learn God's mind, from his ways and works, and should those mean endeavours in the light of the divine spirit, illumine to show you the more excellent way. The Glory be wholly ascribed, to the great giver of every good Gift, Amen.

F I N I S.

A short Sketch of the Gospel Feast.

A Benign Lord (in a severe Season,) orders a Dinner for the Poor of M. 'Tis publish'd, some few won't admit the Report, those I shall call Sceptists, Deists, &c; and some like not the Donor, rather would be Satan's Messmates, openly, profane. However, most attend, some meerly taste, others feed, the Lord having previously determin'd a Moiety for such as receiv'd no pay of the Parish, ordered it to be secretly given, (which I shall call the white Stone, and new name, with farther Promises,) this settled a request, publickly made as follows. A Garden near hand needs Culture, assistance for a few Hours would be acceptable, this causes searching, some plead lameness, ergo ignorance, some had engaged to take a walk after Dinner, those I call Antinomians, some reason'd were they call'd for his bye ends, these are murmurers against the good Man of the House, who say what profit is it, &c.

But those who receive the Gift, are won over, their Hearts the Chariots of a willing People, one says Lord, what wilt thou have me to do, another, thy requests are not grievous, a third's Heart is opened, a fourth, I will run, I am thy Servant truly, at last, a Senior alledges, behold we are all here before God to do, &c. Those I call a conventicle of true Calvinists, who though they should hap unavoidably to soil themselves in digging, are furnish'd with a Fountain near, where they may not only wash their Feet, John 13th & 10th, but also bathe, satisfy'd their labour, will not be in vain in the Lord,

AN EPIGRAM.

Though F—tch—s Sermon, * and my proof,
For Heav'ns sure hold, seem clear enough;
Let me ingeniously retract,
Who can deny Matters of Fact?
Since Works, and Merit, have ta'en place,
'Tis plain a Man, may fall from Grace.

* Alluding to a Manuscript Ser. from Rom. 11. 5th, 6th.

